

pointless nomenclatural discussion. My inclination with indistinct subspecies and clinal variation is to favour the suppression of all names for subspecies which are simply ends of a cline, while recognizing that variation exists, i.e. scheme b. However, the existing names will undoubtedly continue to be used to describe the various morphs. Hence, as subspecific names have been published, both of which describe recognizable populations, and since the type of the species belongs to an intermediate population, it may be safest to continue to use all 3 names, restricting the nominate to populations 3, 6 and 7 as in scheme a, or only to 3 and 6.

The above examination of tail pattern and morphometrics reveals that the previously-described subspecies are rather poorly-differentiated, though recognizable. I hesitate to complicate the nomenclatural situation further by pointing out that population 7 seems one of the best-differentiated, as well as being geographically isolated and that it, if any, deserves glorification with its own name.

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Notes on the birds of Buton (Indonesia, southeast Sulawesi)

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The author stayed on the island of Buton (Butung) 19 July–4 August 1981 and made observations on its birds. The most recent publication on the birds of Buton and Muna at that time was by van Bemmelen & Voous (1951), who give a survey of the records from the literature and from collections. For this work G. A. L. den Haan collected on Buton and Muna in September and October 1948. van Bemmelen & Voous also give an account of the zoogeography and a short description of the vegetation and geology of

these islands. New data were published by White & Bruce (1986). However, many species I recorded are not recorded for the avifauna of Buton in the works cited and are given here.

Trips were made daily from the capital Bau-Bau to areas between Kolagana, Labunka and Bataoga. In the lower levels of this area there are many arid fields with tall grass, 'alang-alang', and sparsely distributed bushes and trees. Moderately large sections of the valley near Karing-Karing (indicated below as "K.-K.") had been recently transformed into wet paddy fields. Most hills had more or less developed secondary forest, but the area between Badia and Labunka was mostly of a dry savanna character. A forest with quite tall trees and a well-developed undercover was found along a river near Bungi.

The species new for Buton and not recorded from Muna are indicated* and those already recorded on Muna and new for Buton only are indicated†. Nomenclature and sequence follow White & Bruce (1986).

*LITTLE BLACK CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax sulcirostris*. On several occasions one was flying near the harbour of Bau-Bau.

*GREAT FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata minor*. One definite adult male flying low over land north of Bataoga, 25 July, but many other records of frigatebirds have remained unidentified.

*LESSER FRIGATEBIRD *Fregata ariel*. One adult male seen between Bau-Bau and Palau Makassar, 26 July.

*CINNAMON BITTERN *Ixobrychus cinnamomeus*. A male in bushy marshland along a stream near K.-K., 27 July.

†LITTLE EGRET *Egretta garzetta*. Several small groups in rice cultivation near K.-K., 27 July.

*SHORT-BILLED EGRET *Egretta intermedia*. Several on the paddy fields near K.-K., 27 July.

†GREAT-BILLED HERON *Ardea sumatrana*. One fishing on the coast of Pulau Makassar at dawn and later in the morning flying over the bay and landing near Bungi, 19 July.

*PURPLE HERON *Ardea purpurea*. One on the paddy fields near K.-K., 27 July.

*GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*. One in a marshland near K.-K., 27 July.

†BARRED HONEY-BUZZARD *Pernis celebensis*. One flying between Badia and Labunka, 22 July.

†BLACK-SHOULDERED KITE *Elanus caeruleus*. One carrying twigs in its bill near Labunka, 22 July.

*SPOTTED HARRIER *Circus assimilis*. A male hunting above an alang-alang field west of Badia, 19 July.

*LESSER FISH-EAGLE *Ichthyophaga humilis*. One at a wood margin south of K.-K., 27 July.

*BLACK EAGLE *Ictinaetus malayensis*. One flying south of K.-K., 27 July.

*ORIENTAL HOBBY *Falco severus*. One flying between Badia and Liabunka, 22 July.

*GREAT CRESTED TERN *Sterna bergii*. More than 20 flying along the coast near Bungi, 20 July, together with smaller terns, probably Whiskered Terns *Chlidonias hybridus*.

†UNIFORM SWIFTLET *Aerodramus vanikorensis*. Swiftlets were common and most probably belonged to this species.

*RAINBOW BEE-EATER *Merops ornatus*. Small groups of this migrant from Australia were regularly seen along the coast and in savannah areas in the hills.

*SULAWESI PYGMY WOODPECKER *Picoides temmincki*. A pair west of Badia, 22 July.

†SULAWESI CICADABIRD *Coracina morio*. A pair east of Badia, 21 July.

†PIED TRILLER *Lalage nigra*. One in a bush east of Badia, 21 July.

*GOLDEN-HEADED CISTICOLA *Cisticola exilis*. A male singing in a marsh-land bush north of K.-K., 27 July.

Other species, more or less regularly recorded, were: *Egretta sacra*, *Ciconia episcopus*, *Haliastur indus*, *Haliaeetus leucogaster*, *Spizaetus lanceolatus*, *Falco moluccensis*, *Pluvialis fulva*, *Actitis hypoleucos*, *Ducula luctuosa*, *Macropygia amboinensis*, *Cacatua sulphurea*, *Centropus bengalensis*, *Phaenicophaeus calorhynchus*, *Hemiprocne longipennis*, *Halcyon chloris*, *H. melanorhyncha*, *Hirundo tahitica*, *Coracina leucopygia*, *Lalage sueurii*, *Saxicola caprata*, *Trichastoma celebensis*, *Cisticola juncidis*, *Artamus leucorhynchus*, *Streptocitta albigollis*, *Anthreptes malacensis*, *Nectarina jugularis*, *N. sericea*, *Zosterops chloris*, *Lonchura malacca*, *Dicrurus hottentottus*, *Oriolus chinensis*, *Corvus enca* and *Aplonis minor*.

Later in August a specimen of *Scissirostrum dubium* was found dead at Bau-Bau by the author's father. According to local information from various people a group of pelicans, "Buru Australis" and recognized from an illustration, regularly visited the coast near Bungi in the evening. Hornbills were said to have become scarce in this area because of human disturbance. Catching and trading of birds in general occurred, but probably on a small scale only.

In total, 15 species not seen on Buton and Muna previously were recorded for the first time from Buton. Of these, 4 species of herons and an ibis were seen on the paddy fields near Karing-Karing, apparently a recent phenomenon for this area. The seabirds have probably been overlooked in the past. Various other newly recorded species, such as *Pernis celebensis* and *Falco severus*, may also have been overlooked previously. *Circus assimilis* and *Cisticola exilis*, birds of "the grassland route" (Stresemann 1939), may have expanded in relation to an increase in number and size of open habitats with grass vegetation, resulting from (earlier) human activities. Finally 7 species new for Buton were already known from the neighbouring island Muna and could thus have been expected on Buton.

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Fossil birds in the British Museum: corrections to Lydekker's (1891) catalogue

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In 1846–47, while in New Zealand as Government Commissioner for the settlement of native land claims, the Honourable W. B. D. Mantell, son of the renowned scientist Sir Gideon A. Mantell, acquired a large collection of sub-fossil bird bones, many of them from the dune sands of the South Taranaki-Wanganui region on the North Island's west coast. This material, as was typical of collections of that period, was shipped to England to be studied by the famed palaeontologist Sir Richard Owen, K.C.B. and later (c. 1855) purchased by the British Museum of Natural History (BMNH). Subsequently, much of it was incorporated into Lydekker's (1891) 'Catalogue of the fossil birds in the British Museum (Natural History)', a volume which, to date, remains the only comprehensive, published listing of that institution's subfossil avian material.

The first specimen to be discussed in this corrective note is the left tarsometatarsus of a small kiwi (Apterygidae) in the Walter Mantell collection (BMNH 32237a), illustrated and described by Lydekker (1891: 217–19). Its locality is given by Lydekker (1891: 219) only as "New Zealand", but it seems most probable that it was collected from the Holocene dune sands of Waingongoro, South Taranaki. Buick (1931) chronicled Mantell's collecting expeditions and reported that nearly all of his specimens were obtained from just 2 sources, firstly the dune sands on the South Taranaki coast, and secondly from swamp deposits at Waikouaiti in the South Island. BMNH 32237a exhibits the pale, yellow-brown colour, light weight and somewhat weathered appearance typical of subfossil bones from sand dune deposits, rather than the dark-brown, iron-stained appearance evident in bones from humic swamp deposits such as Waikouaiti.

Lydekker (1891: 218) erected a new genus, *Pseudapteryx*, for this specimen, thus making BMNH 32237a the unique holotype of *P. gracilis*. Lambrecht (1933: 227) and Brodkorb (1963: 219) accepted the validity of this species, but Oliver (1955: 47) only cited, without comment, Lydekker's original description. Kinsky *et al.* (1970) and Scarlett (1972) apparently disregarded *Pseudapteryx* despite there having been no formal rejection of the name.